

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1117

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7093

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, VS, VT

SUBJECT: VATICAN CONTACTS WITH VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES

1. RELIABLE VATICAN SOURCE HAS INFORMED US THAT HOLY SEE'S REPRESENTATIVES IN SEVERAL CAPITALS (HE WOULD NAME ONLY PARIS) HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH PRG AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS NORTH VIETNAMESE. VATICAN IS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING AUTHORIZATION FROM NEW GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON TO RESUME COMMUNICATION WITH APOSTOLIC DELEGATE LEMAITRE WHO HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE VATICAN SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON. VATICAN HAS LEARNED, HOWEVER, THROUGH FRENCH GOVERNMENT THAT LEMAITRE IS ALIVE AND WELL. VATICAN ALSO HAS BROACHED WITH PRG REPRESENTATIVES POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUING CHURCH-CONNECTED AID PROGRAMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND, IF SO, WHETHER AID CAN BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH LOCAL CHURCH OR WHETHER THIS WILL HAVE TO BE DONE THROUGH GOVERNMENT AGENCY.

2. COMMENT: QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF NEW SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT BY HOLY SEE DOES NOT ARISE SINCE HOLY SEE NOT IN PRACTICE OF ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH DIVIDED COUNTRIES IN WHICH THERE QUESTION ABOUT FUTURE POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS. AT THE MOST, VATICAN IS HOPING IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR ARCHBISHOP LEMAITRE TO REMAIN AS APOSTOLIC DELEGATE IN SAIGON, RECOGNIZED BY THE NEW REGIME. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

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